

MEMORANDUM

May 30, 2002

RE: Amendments to the Wichita-Sedgwick County Unified Zoning Code Old Town Overlay (OT-O) section, effective April 13, 2002.

Amendments to the Zoning Code Old Town Overlay section create two new subdistricts of the OT-O. Both of these subdistricts are special in that they have unique differences from the remaining OT-O district; however, both of the subdistricts are consistent with the stated purpose and intent of the OT-O, as found in the Zoning Code. The first is the Theater subdistrict (OT-O/TH); this subdistrict is generally located between 2nd Street North and 3rd Street North, and between Rock Island Avenue and the BNSF Railroad tracks. Some design standards of the OT-O Theater subdistrict differ from those of the remaining OT-O, recognizing that all the buildings are new construction and that a multi-screen cinema is the anchor of a planned, high-energy, entertainment area.

The second special subdistrict is the Northeast End subdistrict (OT-O/NE), generally located north of 2nd Street North and east of Rock Island Avenue. The parking requirements for this subdistrict differ from the remaining, larger OT-O, recognizing more limited parking circumstances. Buildings in this subdistrict cover most of the lot area, with little land available for parking and no plans to develop public parking. Therefore it is appropriate to relax some parking standards in order to encourage redevelopment while preserving the existing buildings.

Design standards in the Theater subdistrict differ from the remaining OT-O as follows. Ornamental towers or other architectural elements may exceed five and one-half stories in height. Exterior building walls may be finished in earth-tone colors and may utilize concrete and synthetic stucco, in combination with and subordinate to brick and other more traditional materials. Iron railings may be of a consistent ornamental styling. Illuminated signs may contain flashing and moving elements and may change brightness, but such signs shall not include strobe lights or any lights which could be mistaken for emergency vehicle lighting. A sign or part of a sign may move or rotate. A theater marquee sign may be backlit, may be plastic, and may project more than eight feet from the vertical plane of the building.

Design standards changed within the entire OT-O include the following. The height limit of new buildings and building additions has been increased from four and one-half stories to five and one-half stories. Rooftop additions of one additional floor may now be added to the top of existing buildings over three stories in height, or existing rooftop additions may be expanded on the roof of these buildings. However, the new construction of rooftop additions must be set back from the exterior wall lines and designed so as to minimize its visibility from the street level nearby and preserve the original appearance of the existing buildings. Additionally, signs within the entire Old Town District must be illuminated indirectly, except that individual letters may now be backlit.

Please direct any questions concerning this memorandum to Jess McNeely, Associate Planner, MAPD at 268-4421.